



Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

7 Deadly Characteristics to Your Godly Peace, Joy and Contentment

August 8, 2021 Lesson 4

As we continue our series today with the **"7 Deadly Characteristics to Your Godly Peace, Joy and Contentment"** we will be focusing primarily on Comparisons. You will remember from last week, we covered the first of our characteristics, Perfectionism.

Each of these characteristics that can and will totally destroy your Christian Spirit and God's ability to work through you for a Victorious, Peaceful and Content Christian Life:

1. Perfectionism
2. **Comparisons**
3. Pride
4. Selfishness (Your relationship with God and what serves as its basis)
5. Competiveness With Wrongly Placed Motives
6. Not Recognizing and Using Your God Given Spiritual Gifts
7. Control

As we step through each of these deadly characteristics to our Spiritual conditions, we need to remind ourselves that this whole series is about each of us **Freeing our Heart, Mind, Body and Soul!**

A. **Introduction of Comparisons**

Key starter questions for today's lesson:

- Are you constantly dogged by comparisons that make you feel inadequate or inferior?
- Do others always seem to smarter, prettier, more talented than you?
- Do we end up developing negative mindsets or self-perception from our comparisons?
- Are we consumed with competition and comparison? Do you always the need to "win" or be better?

Comparisons can easily create feelings of envy and jealousy

- Do you have hidden feelings of inferiority?
- Do you have an insatiable desire for success?
- Do you need a lot of recognition for your achievements?
- Do you tend to be status conscious?
- Do you find it hard to pay compliments to others?
- Can you truly share in the success of another successful person?
- Do you base your self-image on your performance?

If you answered yes to some of these questions, you may be having trouble with comparisons, envy or jealousy, even though it is so difficult to recognize or personally accept.

Our goal in this lesson is to 1) spotlight what God says about comparisons and what they are based on and 2) to try and understand what drives our envy and jealousy so that we can be better equipped and recognize how deadly this can be our spirituality, wellbeing and overall health.

A. **Scriptures for Lesson:**

2 Corinthians 12:13

12 We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise. 13 We,

however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the sphere of service God himself has assigned to us, a sphere that also includes you.

Galatians 1:10

10 For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Galatians 6:4

4 Let everyone be sure to do his very best, for then he will have the personal satisfaction of work done well and won't need to compare himself with someone else".

B. Dangers of Comparisons Leading to Envy and Jealousy:

Constant and unhealthy comparisons can create lingering feelings of inadequacy, insecurity and literally torment yourself with questions about yourself.

Jealousy and envy are emotions we all feel from time to time and if allowed to become dominant in our lives, they change our perspectives, keep us from realizing God's purpose in our lives and possibly lead us into destructive behavior. Jealousy and envy impede or destroy our growth to spiritual maturity.

While sometimes the *jealousy* and *envy* are interchangeably used, there is a difference. Jealousy can be used in a good sense. Its root is *zelos*, the same word from which we also get *zeal*, or *zealous*. When the word is applied to God, saying He is a jealous God means He demands that we worship and love Him exclusively.

In a bad sense, jealousy is a fear of being displaced by a rival in affection or favor. To be jealous is to be anxiously suspicious or vigilant. [Proverb 27:4](#) says, "Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?" The implication of this Scripture is that jealousy is hidden. It corrupts our motives, thoughts, and actions.

Envy, on the other hand, always has a bad meaning. Envy is defined as "a feeling of discontent and resentment aroused by another's desirable possessions or qualities, accompanied by a strong desire to have them for oneself." Scripture reminds us, "A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones" ([Prov. 14:30](#))

God on the other hand tells us that I should concentrate only on **doing my personal best**--in whatever work I do, or whatever role I'm in--and I can feel secure and satisfied knowing that God is pleased with me, and I don't need to compare myself with anyone else.

If we will concentrate on becoming who GOD created us to be--instead of who we think we ought to be, or who someone else wants us to be--we will experience a sense of peace and security that will enable us to resist focusing on what those around us are doing. You are unique! And God is fitting you for a purpose like no one else's.

C. Steps to Eliminate Comparisons, Envy and Jealousy:

1. To be content, we need to swap lies for truth

He wants us to walk in step with his Spirit. The world is forever pointing out things that should be ours, creating in us a sense of entitlement and pushing us farther down the road of discontentment.

2. To be content, we need to praise God in all circumstances

God is more concerned about transforming us into the image of his Son than he is about how it will temporarily affect us. Paul wrote to the church that he was [content no matter his circumstances](#). He tells us to be content *in* our circumstances, not thankful *for* our circumstances. This has nothing to do with our feelings.

3. To be content, we must rid ourselves of Damaging Comparisons

Contentment is attainable, but first we must rid ourselves of these dangerous comparisons. And they will die as long as we keep our eyes focused on the King of Kings, the only one worth looking at.

4. Recognize that we are envious or jealous

Acknowledging our envy means looking at ourselves honestly. [Galatians 5:16-21](#) tells us that envy is a product of our sinful human nature. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you whether your real motives are for selfish gain or to achieve status in other people's eyes.

5. Choose with Your Will to Get Rid of It

Harboring envy keeps us from hungering for God's Word, and God's Word is vital for us to continue to grow spiritually. ([1 Pet. 2:1-2](#)). [Galatians 5:26](#) says envy will also keep us from living the Spirit-controlled life God wants for His children. It's a deadly deterrent to spiritual growth. By making a choice, then asking God to empower us, we use His power to overcome envy or jealousy. With His help, we can do it.

6. Confess It As Sin and Accept Forgiveness

God promises to forgive and cleanse us from all sin if we agree with Him that what we are doing is sin. Only when we recognize the problem will we begin to allow God to change us.

7. Accept Yourself As You Are with gratitude

Thank God every day that you are just the person He created you to be. Thank Him that He chose you to be His own. Thank Him for your face and figure, your health, your abilities, your family, your job, your bank account, your friends. Thank Him for the spiritual gifts that make you necessary to the body of believers.

8. Learn the Joy of Giving to Others

Envy is rooted in selfishness. It's only concerned with satisfying the cravings of the envious person. When we share our material possessions, praise the success of others, and encourage others in reaching their goals, serve others; we will begin to experience the joy that comes from giving.

9. Keep Earthly Achievements in Eternal Perspective

The body we spend so much money on will return to dust. The wardrobe, the beautiful home, the bank account, the advanced degree, the recognition—all those things that we give our lives to are going to remain on Planet Earth after we've departed. There is nothing wrong with possessions and desiring nice things in and of itself. The issue is one of desire, drive and purpose. Driving ourselves to be the best we can for achievement is not a sin by itself, but what we make and do with it!

10. Set Your Heart on Heavenly Things

When we trusted Jesus Christ, we received a new nature. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. It's God's intention that our hearts and minds ought to be focused on new goals, and that our conduct should be controlled by new standards. Follow the Spirit's leading for our own lives and choose to be grateful for everything God does for us. This will ultimately be the way envy is routed out of our hearts.

D. Questions for Small Group Discussion:

1. Discuss how “Comparisons” are the basis or beginning of envy?
2. How can a person be “content and satisfied” if they are consumed or driven by envy or jealousy?
3. What does God’s Word say about the way to change our sinful desire of envy or comparison?
4. What Spiritual items allow you to focus on your purpose instead of looking at other people?
5. Why must we make a “*conscious decision*” to begin to limit the impact and effects of comparisons on our lives?
6. Discuss how envy or jealousy creates a feeling of inferiority? How will this sin potentially lead to a problem with our self-image and mental health?

Let’s finish today’s lesson with a probing poem about comparisons:

The stick I made for measuring
I used most every day.
It helped me to compare myself
with others on my way.
I watched all those behind me,
or further down the road,
and I would readjust my pace
or lighten up my load.
The only real drawback
with how I ran my race
was watching everything around,
except my Savior's face.